

A NEW FOSSIL POLYPORE

ARTHUR HOLLICK

Pseudopolyporus carbonicus gen. et sp. nov.

Pileus about 4.4 cm. in diameter, approximately flat on top with uneven surface, slightly concave beneath with evenly and minutely roughened and pitted surface, margin rather abruptly inflexed. Stalk central or slightly eccentric, cylindrical, about 2.8 cm. in length and 1.2 cm. in diameter, with conical base. (Figs. 1, 2.)

Carboniferous. Elk Ridge Colliery, West Virginia.

Type in the Museum of the New York Botanical Garden.

This specimen was brought to light during a recent examination of a collection of carboniferous plants from West Virginia, included in the material deposited with the Garden by Columbia University in 1901. Neither the name of the collector nor the



FIGS. 1, 2. *Pseudopolyporus carbonicus*.

date of collection is recorded, the labels merely reading: "Fossil plants below Seam 3, Elk Ridge Colliery, Pocohontas Field, W. Va." This colliery is situated near Ennis, McDowell County, in the southern part of West Virginia.

The fossilizing medium is a highly ferruginous, fine-grained arenaceous shale, which has completely replaced the vegetable

tissue. In fact, the question may be raised whether the specimen is actually of organic origin. The occasional striking similarity of purely inorganic concretions to living organisms, both animal and vegetable, is well known; but in this instance the resemblance to a hymenomycetous fungus appears to be too perfect to be regarded as an accidental simulation.

It is apparently referable to the Polyporaceae, as indicated by the character of the under surface of the pileus, and may be compared with *Polyporus Polyporus* (Retz.) Murrill, so far as its nearest living relationship is concerned; but its antiquity should preclude a reference to the living genus *Polyporus*, and it is clearly different from any of the fossil forms described under that genus or under the fossil genus *Polyporites*, all of which are from the Tertiary or more recent geological horizons, except *Polyporites Bowmanni* Lindley and Hutton,* from the Carboniferous of England, which is generally considered by paleontologists to be a fish scale and not a fungus. In fact, the only fossil forms with which our specimen may be even remotely compared are *Hydnum argillae* Ludwig,† and *Agaricites Wardianus* Meschinelli,‡ both of them from Tertiary horizons.

The generic name is designed to indicate its probable botanical affinities and the specific name its geologic age.

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* Foss. Fl. Great Britain 1: 183, pl. 65, f. B1 and B2. 1831-33.

† "Fossile Pflanzen aus der Altesten Abtheilung der Rheinisch-Wetterauer Teritär-Formation." Palaeontog. 8: 57, pl. 8, f. 1, 1a-1c. 1859.

‡ "Di un Probabile Agaricino Miocenico." Atti Soc. Veneto-Trentina Sci. Nat. 12²: 312, pl. 8. 1891.